

Iraq Assistance Group and Transition Teams
Messages, Q's & A's
(As of 18 October 2006)

1. Overarching Messages:

- **Message A: The Iraq Assistance Group provides life-cycle tasks necessary for the support of transition teams embedded with Iraqi Security Forces, to include:**
 - Pre-mobilization and pre-deployment training guidance;
 - Coordination of movement to, within, and departure from Iraq
 - Identification of equipment requirements and determination of team assignments;
 - Administrative control of all externally sourced teams: personnel management and replacement, evaluations, awards processing, equipment accountability and control;
 - Providing oversight for the five stages of transitions team training.
- **Message B: Embedded transition teams are a key factor in the enhancement of the capability and professionalism of the Iraqi Security Forces.**
 - Advise, coach, teach, and mentor Iraqi Security Forces;
 - Enable Iraqi units to rapidly develop and improve their leadership capability;
 - Support Iraqi units with expertise, planning assistance and evaluation to facilitate quality training;
 - Assist with logistics and battlefield enabling effects, such as medical evacuation, close air support, and artillery.
- **Message C: Flexible, resilient, and steadfast, embedded transition teams provide a positive and professional example for their Iraqi partners in dealing with adversity and the challenges of serving in a democratic nation.**
 - Focus on operations – develop Iraq command, control and operational capabilities at all levels;
 - Assist Iraqi Security Forces in developing support and sustainment systems at every level;
 - Work with Iraqi counterparts to enhance the understanding of the rule of law and fundamental human rights.

Q1. What was the genesis of the Iraq Assistance Group?

A1. The Iraq Assistance Group, formed in 2005, was established to support a shift in the focus of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2004, the Iraqi Transitional Government and the Coalition intensified the commitment to Iraq's security self-reliance. Built on the concept of "partnership" expressed in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546, they chose the Iraqi term *Iltizam Mushtarak*, or *United Commitment*, to express the collective devotion to this expanded effort. This shift in focus resulted in a new program, which included three major actions:

1. The pairing of Coalition and Iraqi units from division to battalion level for enhanced operational training;
2. The embedding of Coalition Transition Teams (originally named Military Assistance Teams) within Iraqi units from division to battalion level for enhanced operational training and as a means of providing Iraqi units with direct access to Coalition enablers such as air support, artillery, medical evacuation and intelligence gathering;
3. The establishment of the Iraq Assistance Group (originally named the Iraqi Assistance Group (Provisional)) to provide administrative and personnel management support for the embedded transition teams.

Q2. What is the mission of the IAG today?

A2. The IAG executes the full range of tasks necessary to receive, train, employ, sustain, and recover "advisory-ready" transition teams throughout their lifecycle to meet the combatant commander's requirements in support of the Iraqi Security Forces. Additionally the IAG serves as the coordination authority for the National Police Joint Task Force in order to support the development of a credible Iraqi National Police. Spread across four locations -- Camp Buehring in Kuwait; Camp Taji, south of Baghdad; the headquarters at Camp Victory in Baghdad; and the National Transition Training Center at Fort Riley, Kansas; the IAG mission includes the following:

- Oversight for the five stages of transitions team training;
- Providing pre-mobilization and pre-deployment training guidance;
- Coordination of movement to, within, and departure from Iraq;
- Identification of equipment requirements,
- Determination of team assignments;
- Administrative control of all externally sourced transition teams to include:
 - Personnel management and replacement,
 - Evaluations and awards processing,
 - Equipment accountability and control.

- Working closely with the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas, in the training and preparation of all the transition teams

Q3. What is the composition of the IAG?

A3. The IAG is a two-star subordinate command of Multinational Corps – Iraq, located at Camp Victory, Iraq, and consists of approximately 70 military members from all services to include Guard and Reserve members. The joint unit is organized functionally, with a deputy chief of staff for support which includes personnel and supply functions (J-1 and J-4 respectively); and a deputy chief of staff for operations, which includes operations, plans and communications (J-3, J-5 and J-6 respectively).

Q4. What kinds of transition teams are there?

A4. The transition team program has evolved significantly since its inception in early 2005 and continues to do so. Originally, teams were sourced by units already in Iraq – then called “out-of-hide” - now referred to as “internal” teams. There are still several internal teams throughout Iraq; however, the majority of teams are now being sourced by all the military services -- primarily the Army and Marine Corps. These are referred to as “external” teams. Internal and external transition teams are embedded with Iraqi Army units, the Department of Border Enforcement, the National Police (originally known as “special police”, “commandos”, and “public order”), local Iraqi Police, and various other organizations to include the Joint Headquarters, Ministries of Interior and Defense, and miscellaneous training centers and schools.

Q5. What is the relationship between the IAG and these transition teams? Does the IAG have oversight of all of these transition teams?

A5. The IAG mission has evolved since standing up in early 2005 and continues to evolve as the Iraqi Security Forces grow in strength and capability. Currently, the IAG has administrative control of all externally sourced Military Transition Teams (MITTs), Border Transition Teams (BTTs) and National Police Transition Teams (NPTTs) (formerly called Special Police Transition Teams (SPTTs)).

Q6. What do the transition teams do?

A6. Working side by side with Iraqi Security Forces, demonstrating respect and investing in personal and professional relationships, the primary purpose of the embedded transition teams is to advise, coach, teach, and mentor Iraqi Security Forces. These 11-15 man teams provide a mix of combat and support specialties to include: operations, intelligence, logistics, communications, engineering and security. They primarily do the following:

- Assist Iraqi Security Forces to assume full responsibility for the security of their country.

- Provide advisory support and direct access to coalition enablers to enhance the ability of Iraqi security forces – from the battalion through the division operations – to conduct counterinsurgency operations.
- Bring access to special capabilities, such as air support, artillery, medical evacuation and intelligence gathering to help the Iraqi combat insurgents, terrorists, militias, and criminals.

Q7. OK, the transition teams are embedded with the Iraqi Security Forces. Are the Iraqis really effective? Does having transition teams embedded with Iraqi units imply that Iraqi Security Forces are ineffective?

A7. Over the past three years, the Iraqi Security Forces have been rebuilt from the ground up as a modern, effective fighting force. This is a direct result of the initiatives taken in early 2005 and the relationships established by the embedded transition teams. At the time of the 2004 transfer of sovereignty, there were two regular Iraqi army battalions – approximately 1,500 soldiers. As of October 2006, the status of the Iraqi Security Forces has changed significantly:

- The Iraqi Army absorbed the Iraqi National Guard to form 10 Iraqi Army combat divisions.
- The total number of force-generated trained and equipped Iraqi Security Forces reached 312,544. Goal is 325,000.
- Trained and equipped Ministry of Interior (Police) forces passed the 180,000 mark; Ministry of Defense (Military) forces number approximately 131,000.
- Building Iraqi Military has been a three-step process:
 - Training and equipping - organize and train both the army and police, and provide appropriate weapons and equipment needed.
 - Put Iraqi units in the lead with Coalition Forces supporting -- this includes the embedding of transition teams
 - Iraqi Army has 6 Division Headquarters, 27 Brigades and 88 Battalions in the lead.
 - Develop Iraqi Army so they can independently provide security in Iraq.
 - Building institutional capacity
 - Ministerial capacity

Q8. What is the composition of the transition teams?

A8. Transition teams are comprised of 11-15 military personnel, providing a mix of combat and combat support specialties to include: operations, intelligence, logistics, communications, engineering and security.

Q9. What training do these teams go through?

A9. Transition team training has undergone a significant renovation during the past year. In the way of background, in early 2005, operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility shifted to the self-reliance of Iraqi and Afghan security forces. At that time the U.S. Army was tasked to determine the requirements for a long-term, sustainable sourcing and training strategy to enhance the development of Iraqi and Afghan Security Forces. To facilitate and synchronize this effort, Army, Air Force and Navy "external" transition team training was consolidated and is now conducted at Ft Riley, Kansas by the 1st Infantry Division. The entire focus of one of the U.S. Army's combat divisions, the 1st Infantry Division, known worldwide as "The Big Red One", was re-missioned to oversee the training, manning, equipping, deployment, redeployment, and reintegration of organized transition teams. The two-star commander, his entire staff, and two brigade combat teams' worth of leaders and personnel now execute all efforts to man, train, and equip transition teams. The Marine Corps conducts training for Marine transition teams at 29 Palms and Camp Pendleton in California, but may eventually migrate to Fort Riley. After stateside training, all transition teams travel to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility where training continues. First stop is Camp Buehring, Kuwait for in-theater orientation training. Next they fly to Camp Taji, Iraq, for instruction in the practical application of their skills through case studies and vignettes at the Phoenix Academy – the transition team "finishing school." Following completion of the Phoenix Academy, the teams enter the final and most critical stage of their training – a 10-day overlap with the team they are to replace. This phase is commonly referred to as "RIP TOA" which stands for "relief in place, transfer of authority (RIP/TOA)." A successful RIP TOA is critical to the continuity of the relationship with Iraqi counterparts.

Q10. What other countries are providing teams?

A10. The United Kingdom, Korea, Poland, El Salvador, Australia, Denmark, and Italy.

Q11. Does the use of transition teams signal an exit timeline?

A11. No. However, as Iraq achieves security self-reliance, the Coalition will be able to fulfill its commitment to the Iraqi people and withdraw. The embedding of transition teams is another step toward Iraqi security self-reliance in fighting the insurgents, terrorists and criminals that threaten the new government and people of Iraq.

Q12. Who controls the teams working with the Iraqi units?

A12. In 2005, when the Iraqi Transitional Government and the Coalition intensified the commitment to Iraq's security self-reliance, the shift in focus resulted in a program which included three major actions:

1. The pairing of Coalition and Iraqi units from division to battalion level for enhanced operational training;
2. Embedding Coalition transition teams (originally named Military Assistance Teams), within Iraqi units from division to battalion level, and

3. The establishment of the Iraq Assistance Group (originally named the Iraqi Assistance Group (Provisional) to provide administrative and personnel management support for the embedded transition teams.

This is key to understanding the relationships with the teams. Transition teams take their operational orders from the major subordinate command “partnership unit” that is teamed up with their Iraqi unit. For example, the 9th Iraqi Army (IA) Division is teamed with units from the Coalition Multi-National Division- Baghdad (MND-B). Therefore, the 9th IA Division Military Transition Team (MiTTs) takes operational commands from MND-B. However, the Iraq Assistance Group has administrative control of the 9th IA MiTTs. Administrative control includes:

- Providing pre-mobilization and pre-deployment training guidance;
- Coordination of movement to, within, and departure from Iraq;
- Identification of equipment requirements,
- Determination of team assignments;
- Personnel management and replacement,
- Evaluations and awards processing,
- Equipment accountability and control.

Q13. How many teams will you integrate with Iraqi Security Forces?

A13. There are more than 300 embedded transition teams integrated with the Iraqi Security Forces.

Q14. Once the Iraqi Security Forces are capable of fully functioning on their own, will the teams be withdrawn?

A14. This is an evolutionary process. There is a process in place to determine the security levels of the Iraqi units. The Iraqi government will determine when the Iraqi units are capable of fully independent counterinsurgency operations. As the units are deemed independent, adjustments to the transition teams will be made as needed in consultation with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense in the case of the Iraqi Army and the Ministry of Interior in the case of the Iraqi law enforcement agencies.

Q15. Do you have an estimate for how long these teams will remain in place?

A15. These teams will remain in place as long as the Iraqi government deems necessary. Many factors will influence how long the teams are paired with a unit, such as how quickly the various Iraqi Security Force elements develop into forces capable of independent, effective operations.